



## **MINUTES**

### **BOARD OF EQUAL RIGHTS COMMISSIONERS**

**November 16, 2018 at 2:30pm**

**Room 301-A, City Hall, 200 E. Wells Street Milwaukee, WI 53202**

#### **Present:**

Commissioner Chez Ordonez, Acting Chair  
Commissioner Mayhoua Moua  
Commissioner Tony Snell  
Commissioner Sheila Ashley  
Commissioner Martha Collins  
Commissioner Jennifer Bennett  
Commissioner Nathan Guequierre

Sharon Robinson, Director, Dept. of Administration  
Jessica Langill, Dept. of Administration  
Rebecca Rabatin, ADA Coordinator, Dept. of Administration  
Ben Roovers, City Attorney's Office  
James Hannig, Department of Public Works  
Mike Amsden, Department of Public Works  
Abril Curiel, Fair Housing Council  
Mark Powless, South Eastern Oneida Tribal Services  
Shelley Gregory

The meeting was called to order at 2:36 p.m. by Commissioner Ordonez

#### ***1. Approval of Minutes from September and October Meetings***

Commissioner Snell moved to approve the minutes, Commissioner Bennett seconded. No objections. Minutes approved unanimously.

#### ***2. South Eastern Oneida Tribal Services (Mark Powless, Director)***

Commissioner Bennett thanked Mark Powless, Director of South Eastern Oneida Tribal Services (SEOTS) for coming to address the Commission. She asked Powless to let the Commission know

if there is anything they could be doing to help. Powless stated he has been working at SEOTS for about 8 years. SEOTS is a department of the Oneida Nation, which has about 17,000 members, approximately 2,000 of which live in the Milwaukee area. Powless stated SEOTS focuses on cultural education and wellness. He stated when looking at any Native population, there are very big health disparities. Critical wellness issues are diabetes, obesity, and depression/anxiety. Powless stated that policies in the US throughout history have been put in place to exterminate Native people and their culture, which has had a big impact on the community. He stated the communities use cultural education to try to repair the historical damage. Powless mentioned that Indian Community School is a great educational resource.

Commissioner Ordonez thanked Powless for addressing the ERC. He asked what the ERC can do to be a better partner in the future. Powless stated that SEOTS is in the Milwaukee Community providing education on Native Americans in general. He stated that they are always looking for ways to further educate the community. He also stated that there are always opportunities to partner in wellness initiatives. Commissioner Snell asked if there have been any collaborative efforts with the Milwaukee Health Department. Powless stated the only collaboration they have had was when SEOTS was developing community surveys.

Commissioner Snell asked how SEOTS is combatting the health disparities. Powless stated SEOTS uses education and awareness to combat the critical wellness issues. SEOTS partners with Froederdt, the Medical College of WI, and the Indian Health Center to do some direct programming. Commissioner Snell asked about any particular cultural hurdles when seeking healthcare. Powless stated that the Native community overall has a great distrust in any outside system. He stated that direct partnerships help overcome that hurdle. He also stated that direct outreach also goes a long way in repairing trust.

Commissioner Ashley stated she is concerned that Powless stated there is no collaboration within the school systems and that she thinks it is very important for children to be socialized within their culture. She asked if MPS is doing anything to educate students about Indigenous people. Powless stated there is a Title VII program that requires students in MPS to learn about Native history. He also mentioned Act 31.

Commissioner Bennett stated that Act 31 was initiated in 1989/1990 meaning that anyone who graduated before then were most likely not exposed to education about Indigenous people. She stated this means the people administering the education were probably in the school system before 1990. Powless stated Milwaukee has had some teacher training, but he is not sure how consistent it is.

Commissioner Ordonez stated the ERC could potentially reach out to the Milwaukee School Board and start a dialogue about developing a curriculum. Commissioner Guequierre stated the ERC should also partner to do a listening session. Commissioner Ordonez stated it would be good to hear directly from community members what major concerns are. Sharon Robinson stated that Milwaukee be gearing up to do the census in 2020. She stated Powless could possibly be part of the committee in 2019.

### ***3. Procedures Update (Ben Roovers)***

Ben Roovers provided the ERC with a refresher course on the rules and regulations regarding open meeting laws. He provided Commissioners with a power point of the information. Roovers stated this is not his area of expertise, but that there is a City Attorney that deals directly with open meeting laws. Roovers stated that the ERC is clearly defined as a governmental body. He stated a meeting is defined as a get together of Commissioners with the purpose to engage in governmental business with enough members present to make or block a decision.

Roovers stated he has advised the ERC to be careful of walking quorum. Walking quorum is defined as a series of gatherings amongst separate groups of the body, each less than quorum, that carry on the same conversation to enough separate members that reaches quorum. He said the biggest thing to keep in mind regarding walking quorum is email. He stated that bodies are strongly encouraged not to use email to discuss any issues in which they have governmental authority. Roovers advised that using the “reply all” button creates an open meeting and would violate open meetings law. Commissioner Ordonez stated a good best practice when disseminating information to use Bcc so that members cannot reply all.

Commissioner Ordonez asked if it was a good idea for all ERC commissioners to get an official city email. Roovers stated that he did not know if Commissioners were able to obtain an official city email, but that it would be best practice for Commissioners to have a separate email address for ERC business.

Roovers pointed out that a governmental body is not required to allow public comment during a meeting. He stated as a best practice the ERC may want to make a blanket rule that topics can only be discussed that have been noticed on the day’s public agenda.

Roovers stated that if governmental bodies knowingly attempt to violate any open meeting laws they are subject to a personal fine of \$25-\$300. Commissioner Ordonez suggested it would be a good idea to put together a fact sheet regarding best practices.

### ***4. Accessible Bike Update (James Hannig and Mike Amsden)***

James Hannig stated the Accessible Bike Workgroup had their 8<sup>th</sup> meeting yesterday and had also met in September. He stated in the Sept. meeting the workgroup was exploring a potential dock lock made by Bublr Bikes that could be fitted to an adaptive bike and able to be locked to the Bublr stations. He stated that in yesterday’s meeting they found out that Bublr and Ramup Up MKE had received a grant from the Anthem Foundation to work on engagement and operations that could potentially be used for the Accessible Bike pilot. He stated the city is still working to procure bikes and that accessible bikes have been added to the 2019 city budget. Mike Amsden stated the city is on track to announce the pilot program in spring and that Milwaukee will be a model to the nation.

Commissioner Ordonez asked if the city is still pursuing outside vendors and what the timeline looks like for the future. James Hannig stated DPW requested quotes for adaptive bicycles several months ago. He stated they reached out to 8 vendors and received 4 responses. Costs ranged from \$25,000 to \$100,000 for about 17 bikes. James Hannig stated the bikes would be purchased by the city and would own the bikes, but that a partner would operate them on behalf of the city. Amsden stated that the workgroup has been discussing several types of pilot programs, but that the group came to conclusion that they would like the pilot program to mimic the Bublr bikeshare program as much as possible.

Commissioner Ordonez asked why Bublr would not be purchasing the adaptive bikes on their own. Amsden stated that the bicycles currently used by the Bublr program are owned by the city and that Bublr only operates them. Commissioner Collins asked for details regarding details of the pilot program. Hannig stated the workgroup will be working on the pilot program further, but that they are considering having 17 adaptive bikes available through the pilot program. He stated that locations have not been confirmed but locations have been discussed and that the bikes could end up being stationed at any dock. The workgroup and community survey determined the city would purchase 7 tricycles, 3 hand cycles and 7 tandems bikes.

Commissioner Ashley asked if the grant was initiated by Bublr. Hannig stated that DPW was not a part of developing the grant, but that the city is listed as a partner. Amsden stated that the money is expected to be used mainly to educate people on how to use adaptive bikes. He also stated the city will be purchasing the bikes based on the commitment made to the community and ERC.

## ***5. Subcommittee Updates***

Commissioner Snell stated that the Human Rights Day celebration is scheduled for December 8<sup>th</sup> from 10:30am-1:30pm and will be held at America's Black Holocaust Museum. He stated the committee has been working in cooperation with the Milwaukee County Human Rights Commission and the UN Association of Milwaukee. The celebration will include tours of the museum, entertainment, performers, story tellers, and speeches from officials and community leaders. He stated flyers (English & Spanish) will be distributed soon. Public officials have been invited to participate. Commissioner Snell stated the city will be presenting a Proclamation for Anita Ziedler.

Jessica Langill stated the ERC has only received one nomination for the Equality Awards. Commissioner Ordonez asked that the Alder Office also be alerted of the Equality Awards. Commissioner Ordonez asked that partner organizations are also asked to nominate. He also asked that a calendar invite is sent out to Commissioners ASAP.

Commissioner Ordonez stated the strategic planning committee will be meeting Monday from 1-3pm and that the meeting has been publicly noticed since quorum will be present.

## ***6. Annual Report Discussion***

Commissioner Ordonez stated that the ERC's Annual Report is due to the Mayor and Common Council on February 15<sup>th</sup> of every year. He stated that the ERC has accomplished so much that an annual report is important. He stated that accomplishments, events, hurdles, and community partnerships should be highlighted. He stated that it may make sense to start a committee because it is a lengthy process.

Commissioner Snell stated that 2019 is the ERC's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary and that the dates should be included in the annual report. He also suggested that there should be year-long events to celebrate the anniversary.

## ***7. FBI Hate Crimes Report***

Commissioner Snell stated the FBI Hate Crimes Report was released last week and indicated a 17% rise in hate crimes. He stated 59.6% of the hate crimes were based on race/ethnicity, 20.6% based on religion, and 15.8% based on sexual orientation. Individual and property hate crimes continue to rise. Milwaukee had 4 hate crimes reported in the first quarter of 2017. He stated the ERC should be a conduit of discussion about the reporting process and how it is reported to the FBI. He stated the ERC could also put out a statement. Commissioner Ordonez stated the ERC should find out if MPD officers are trained to recognize what a hate crime is. He stated the ERC could create a working agreement with the MPD to be notified on hate crimes that happen in the city. Commissioner Ordonez stated that the current District Attorney does not follow up on hate crimes. He stated the ERC may be able to influence public policy to move the DA to follow up on hate crimes in the future. Commissioner Snell stated the ERC should also partner with community organizations to educate the public on how to report hate crimes.

Commissioner Ordonez stated the ERC should see if there are any municipal equality indexes similar to the HRC related to race and other protected classes. Sharon Robinson stated she would reach out to LRB to ask them to do a study of peer cities that have such indexes. Rebecca Rabatin stated there is a national rating system for communities in regards to disabilities. She stated that Milwaukee did relatively well the last time it was scored.

## ***8. Community Dialogue & Upcoming Events***

Commissioner Moua stated that a Hmong New Year event would be happening December 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> at the State Fair Grounds in the Convention Center. She stated it would be great to have Commissioners and public join. Commissioner Snell shared information about upcoming trainings being led by FORGE.

## ***9. Next Meeting Date: Wednesday, December 19th, 2018***

## ***10. Adjourn***

Meeting adjourned at 4:02 p.m.